

A Jazz Organist's 'Act of Contrition'

By J. D. NICOLA

It's only been heard in two or three monasteries, in a few convents — and whenever he can be gently coaxed — in the homes of his most intimate friends. But those who have heard blind jazz organist Joe Mooney play and sing his "Act of Contrition" say it would rank with "The Lord's Prayer" and "The Ave Maria" as a deeply moving religious song.

"If anyone is not moved by this, they are rather cold," said the Rev. John Frega, OFM Cap., one of the people who hope Joe Mooney will overcome his long reluctance to publicly perform the song he set to music over 20 years ago.

Now stationed in St. Francis Friary in Lafayette, N.J., Father John has on occasion stopped in at Manhattan nightclubs to hear Mooney sing and play. If anyone can help Mooney overcome his sincere reluctance to perform the "Act of Contrition" for the public, Father John can.

A decade ago, as "Gate" Frega, he and his bass helped make Joe Mooney's jazz quartet one of the consistent poll winners. But then "Gate" Frega broke it up, to use a jazz phrase quite literally.

"When the bass man decided to go into the priesthood," Joe Mooney recalls, "that was just about it for that quartet. I tried replacements, but the sound

and feel were just not the same." Joe soon went out on his own, playing singles. A 14-week contract at a nightspot in Miami developed into an 11-year stay, until a woman named Kay Finegan heard him there two years ago and launched "Operation Joe Mooney."

Manager of the famous Sauter-Finegan Orchestra of the middle 1950's, for whom Joe had done the vocal on "Nina Never Knew," Kay Finegan returned to New York and began selling shares to bring out a Joe Mooney album "to introduce a whole new generation to the music that wears so well and has taken a back seat to waiters and thumpers in recent years."

The shares sold, and Joe Mooney made a private recording. Clumbia Records heard it, liked it, and has since released two albums: "The Greatness of Joe Mooney" and "The Happiness of Joe Mooney," in which he plays and sings songs like "The Days of Wine and Roses," "Wait Til You See Her" and "But Beautiful"—in what the "New York Times" has called "a small breathless voice that could not be heard without a microphone."

It was during an interview with Joe Mooney in connection with the albums that he offhandedly mentioned his "Act of Contrition." The subject at

hand was the liturgical use of jazz—he thought the "tremendous amount of evil connotations" of jazz would make the steady use of it in the liturgy a long time coming—and the introduction of new forms of song in Church worship. It was here that he mentioned the "Act of Contrition" he had written.

"I know nothing of liturgical music and it probably breaks every law there is," he said, but he noted that Father John once heard him sing it and encouraged him to perform it for others.

"The words of the Act of Contrition just fell into a melody pattern," he recalls. "It was almost 20 years ago. I just sat down one day and began playing it. I didn't work out the melody or change notes as I went along. I haven't changed it since, but I've never done it in public."

When he was asked why he was so reluctant, he said that just as he was against using his blindness as "an angle" (his eyesight gradually deteriorated years ago) he did not want to exploit his religion.

"I would perform it in public," he said, "if it could be done respectfully."

Perhaps Father John and Kay Finegan and the other friends of Joe Mooney will find a way. (Catholic Entertainment Features)



Nancy Shutter, Jim Hildebrandt and Ted Aldrich (clockwise) are taking leading roles in the Blackfriars' coming production of "The Private Ear."

Blackfriars Lists Comedies

Blackfriars of Rochester will present its first production of the season—Oct. 8, 9, and 10 at St. John Fisher College Auditorium at 8:30 p.m.

The program consists of a matched pair of comedies—"The Private Ear" and "The Public Eye" written by Peter Shaffer, who is also known to theatergoers for his "Five Finger Exercise."

"The Private Ear" and "The

Public Eye" are English comedies—"silky smooth, literature, witty and irresistibly human because they look into the little weaknesses and vulnerabilities of human beings which are often touching as well as funny."

Featured in "The Private Ear" are Ted Aldrich (Tchaik), Nancy Shutter (Doreen), and Jim Hildebrandt (Ted).

Cast for "The Public Eye"

includes Mervin Moss (Christoforo), Dr. David Crown (Charles) and Barbara Burmen (Belinda).

The plays are directed by Richard M. Mancini, produced by Patricia A. Clark with art direction by Carl Zollo and set design by Rolland Michael.

Tickets are available at Midtown Copy Center and at the door.



New York Play Due at Fisher

JEANE ERDMAN'S dance-drama-music-mime version of James Joyce's "Finnegans Wake," called "The Coach with Six Insides," will be presented in St. John Fisher College auditorium on Tuesday, Oct. 19 at 8:15 p.m. The production, which has been hailed by New York and European critics, is being brought from New York by the St. John Fisher College Lecture Series.

Fisher Adds to Staff

Three additional faculty members have been appointed to the staff of St. John Fisher College. They are Dr. Joseph V. Martinez as associate professor of physics, Dr. J. Alexis Fenton as special lecturer in history, and Rev. Eugene A. Heyck, C.S.B., as instructor in mathematics.

Dr. Martinez, 33, left a position as scientist with Xerox Corp. to accept the Fisher appointment. He had been with Xerox for two years. From 1961 to 1963 he was a research associate at Cornell University.

He received his doctorate in physical chemistry from Ore-

gion State University in 1961, his master of science degree in physical chemistry from Washington State University in 1957, and his bachelor's degree from Arizona State University in 1954.

A native of Flagstaff, Arizona, Dr. Martinez is a member of the American Physical Society. His writings have been published in many scientific pub-

lications. He resides with his wife, Jayne, and their six children at 464 Furnace Rd., Ontario.

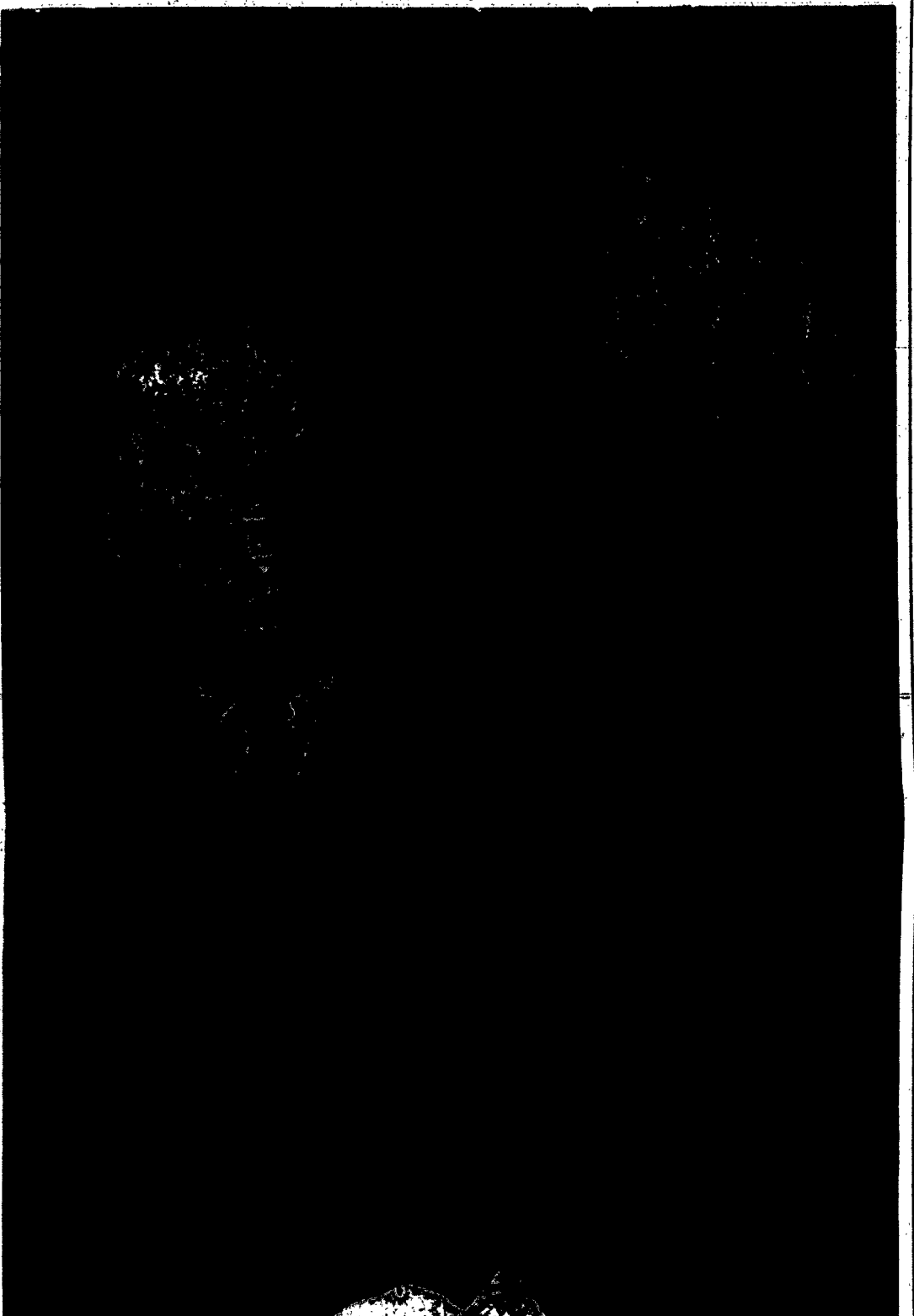
Dr. Fenton, who will teach part time at St. John Fisher, is emeritus professor of history at City College of New York, where he taught for twenty years and served as acting chairman of the history department. He received his bachelor's degree from City College in 1919 and holds advanced degrees from Columbia University. He is the author of numerous historical books.

Father Heyck, who has been rector of the Basilian House of Studies on the Fisher campus since 1963, joins the college faculty as a part time instructor in mathematics. He will continue to supervise the House of Studies. Before entering the Basilian Fathers he served in the U.S. Air Force for 2½ years and received a bachelor of science degree in mechanical engineering from Rice University.

Before his assignment to the local Basilian House of Studies Father Heyck served as assistant chaplain of the Newman Club at the University of Toronto. From 1957 to 1962 he was a high school guidance counselor and assistant pastor at St. Annes parish, Houston. He taught mathematics at the University of St. Thomas in Houston from 1955 to 1957 and engineering drawing at Assumption University in 1949-49.

First Laywoman

Kanjin, Korea—(NC)—The first U.S. laywoman volunteer to serve with the Mother Seton Sisters in Korea is now teaching physical education at St. Joseph's School here. She is Mary Margaret Frederick of Arnold, Pa., on leave from Seton Hill College, Greensburg, Pa.



Jazz Organist Joe Mooney with the Rev. John Frega, OFM Cap., one-time member of Mooney's jazz quartet.

Folksong Festival Planned

A "Folksong Festival," sponsored by the Rochester Unit, National Catholic Theatre Conference, will be held Saturday, Oct. 16 at 8 p.m. in St. Agnes High School auditorium.

Eddie Meath of WHEC-TV will act as master of ceremonies. Sister M. Claudia, S.S.J., is chairman of the Rochester Unit. Colleges and high schools of

the area will participate in the festival. Tickets may be purchased at all Catholic colleges and high schools.

Bible Neglected
Bilefeld — (NC) — Almost two-thirds of the adults in Gettysburg, Pa., do not read the Bible, according to the religious periodical, Evangelical World.

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

ACROSS—

- Pain
- Declare
- Ocean
- Fuel
- Rant
- Total
- Printer's measure
- Clayey earth
- Hindu symbol
- Prefix with 20
- Baseball term
- Braille with difficulty
- Drinks slowly
- Observes
- Change color of
- Entreaties
- Bark
- Compass point
- Encircled
- More indigent
- Babylonian deity
- Dye plant
- Delinquent
- Indonésian tribesman
- Lifeline
- Victorious pirate
- Article of furniture
- Note of music
- Carrying device
- Believed
- Symbol for cerium
- Female zodiac
- Enclosure
- Gray articles plural
- French plural
- Wesley point

DOWN—

- High camp
- Excitement
- Shade tree
- Deceit

6. Depression between mountains

7. For example (abbr.)

8. Soak

9. Dinner course

10. Man's nickname

11. Paid notice

12. Hebrew letter

13. Symbol for silver

14. Unclosed

15. Retain

16. Figure of speech

17. Looked intently

18. Scatter

19. Epic tale

20. Narrow opening

21. Dispatch

22. Cut of meat

23. Food program

24. Forsy

25. Pantry

26. Residue

27. Eats to shed weight

28. Knockout (abbr.)

29. Parent (abbr.)

30. Obstruct

31. Rodent

32. Organ of sight

33. Spanish article

34. Proctarian (abbr.)

35. College degree (abbr.)

36. Senior (abbr.)

SOLUTION

43. Pantry

44. Residue

45. Eats to shed weight

46. Knockout (abbr.)

47. Parent (abbr.)

48. Obstruct

49. Rodent

50. Organ of sight

51. Spanish article

52. Proctarian (abbr.)

53. College degree (abbr.)

54. Senior (abbr.)

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